



CITY OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
Canvassing Authority
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July 13, 2020

TO: Honorable House Judiciary Committee and Leadership
Honorable Senate Judiciary Committee and Leadership

RE: **House Bill 8102**

I previously sent a letter in support of the Board of Elections proposed legislation (House Bill 7896 / Senate Bill 2598) relative to changes to emergency voting. The bills were met with opposition from Common Cause and other voter advocacy groups. I concur with many of the concerns they addressed.

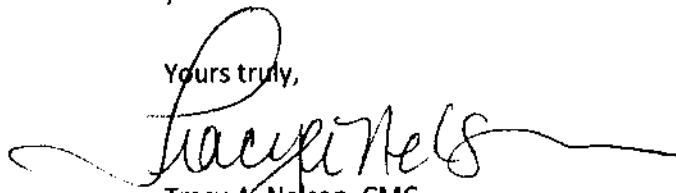
The above-referenced bill is a revision eliminating the changes that were of concern to the advocacy groups and simplifies the legislation to make one basic change; allow the local Boards of Canvassers to utilize electronic poll pads and optical scan ballot readers during the emergency voting period.

With the anticipated increase in the number of voters requesting emergency ballots, passage of this legislation will ensure the local boards continued success during the emergency period by minimizing the number of voters that would need to cast ballots under the current cumbersome process. The majority of emergency ballots would be cast in a manner that mirrors the Election Day process.

This legislation will also greatly benefit voters whereas they will see their ballot has been counted, and have an opportunity to correct ballot errors, an advantage not provided by the current process. There would be an added bonus of ballot security since there would not be frequent transport of ballots from local boards to the Board of Elections.

For the reasons aforementioned, I strongly urge you to pass this legislation. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours truly,



Tracy A. Nelson, CMC
Newport Canvassing Clerk